THE MPISCC NEWSLETTER

Scoop.

OCT '26

What's Next, Now.

LOOKING AHEAD WITH CLARITY, NOT HYPE.



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INSIGHTS
DESTINATIONS
SOLUTIONS

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FEATURE STORY

The Future of Events Is Already Here.



How artificial intelligence is reshaping the industry and redefining what's possible.

For an industry built around bringing people together, change has always been part of the job.

We've watched technology transform how people register, participate, and connect at events. But artificial intelligence is introducing something different. It's not just changing the tools we use. It's changing how we think about planning, creativity, and the attendee experience.

And while AI is often discussed as the next big thing, the reality is that it's already here.

BEYOND THE PLANNING PROCESS

AI is becoming part of nearly every stage of the event journey, from brainstorming concepts and developing content to analyzing attendee behavior and identifying opportunities for improvement.

Tasks that once required hours of administrative work can now be completed in minutes, giving planners more time to focus on strategy, creativity, and the details that make an experience memorable.

But the real potential of AI goes beyond efficiency.

Imagine an event where attendees receive personalized session recommendations, discover meaningful networking opportunities based on shared interests, and experience programming shaped by a deeper understanding of what matters to them.

These capabilities are already emerging across event technology, creating opportunities to move beyond one-size-fits-all experiences toward something more intentional and personal.

TECHNOLOGY MEETS HUMAN CONNECTION

Of course, with innovation comes responsibility. As AI becomes more integrated into our industry, questions around data privacy, accuracy, and authenticity deserve thoughtful consideration. And while technology can help us work smarter, it can't replace the instincts, relationships, and creativity that event professionals bring to the table.

AI might help identify the right people to connect, but it can't recreate the energy of a room when those connections happen. It can generate ideas, but it doesn't understand the small, thoughtful touches that turn an ordinary event into an unforgettable experience.

That's where our industry will always have an advantage.

THE FUTURE OF EVENTS ISN'T ABOUT CHOOSING BETWEEN TECHNOLOGY AND HUMAN CONNECTION.

IT'S ABOUT FINDING WAYS FOR ONE TO STRENGTHEN THE OTHER.



MPISCC HONORS

INSTALLATION, AWARDS & YEAR-AHEAD CELEBRATION

Join us for MPISCC Honors, our new signature year-end celebration bringing together recognition, leadership, and community.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2026
6:30PM - 9:30PM
SKIRBALL CULTURAL CENTER
LOS ANGELES

CLICK HERE TO SECURE YOUR TICKETS!

Freelancer: When You Are the Planner, the Business Owner, and the Entire Team

BY DEANNA ZERCHER

Being an independent meeting planner or entrepreneur comes with incredible freedom. You choose the clients you work with, shape your business around your goals, and have the opportunity to build something that is uniquely yours.

But there is another side to being your own boss. When you are the entire team, there is no one waiting to remind you to take a break, step away from your computer, or hand off a project when your workload becomes too much.

In the events industry, where long hours and demanding timelines are already common, working independently can make it especially difficult to separate your professional life from your personal one. The laptop comes home. Client messages arrive after hours. The next event is always somewhere in the back of your mind.

Over time, being constantly available can begin to feel like the only way to succeed.

It isn't.

THE PRESSURE OF DOING IT ALL

Independent planners wear many hats. You may spend the morning developing a proposal, the afternoon negotiating with a vendor, and the evening answering client emails. At the same time, you are managing contracts, finances, marketing, scheduling, business development, and the countless details that come with producing an event.

The challenge is that there is rarely a natural stopping point.

There is always another email to answer, another proposal to finish, or another detail that could be improved. When your business depends heavily on you, stepping away can feel uncomfortable.

But constantly working does not necessarily mean you are being productive. Eventually, mental fatigue affects creativity, decision-making, patience, and the quality of the work you provide.

Recognizing that limit is not a weakness. It is good business.

CREATE BOUNDARIES THAT WORK FOR YOU

One of the greatest benefits of working independently is the ability to create a schedule that supports the way you work best. Establishing boundaries allows that flexibility to work in your favor rather than turning into an expectation that you are available around the clock.

Set realistic working hours and communicate them clearly with clients. Create designated times for checking email instead of allowing notifications to interrupt your entire day. When an event is not actively taking place, give yourself permission to disconnect from it.

Boundaries may feel uncomfortable at first, particularly in an industry where responsiveness is often associated with excellent service. Over time, however, clear expectations can actually strengthen client relationships. Clients know when they can expect a response, and you know when you are allowed to step away.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO IT ALONE

Being an entrepreneur does not mean you have to operate in isolation.

Build relationships with other planners, vendors, industry colleagues, mentors, and professional communities. Having people who understand the unique pressures of events can provide a valuable outlet when you need to talk through a challenging client, complicated event, or difficult business decision.

There is also strength in knowing when to bring in additional support. Hiring an assistant for administrative tasks, bringing in freelance event staff, or outsourcing work that falls outside your strengths can create valuable space.

Delegation does not diminish your role as a planner. It allows you to focus your energy where it matters most.

MAKE RECOVERY PART OF THE BUSINESS PLAN

Time away from work should not only happen when you have nothing left on your calendar.

If possible, schedule recovery time after major events just as intentionally as you schedule client meetings and event deadlines. Give yourself time to sleep, reconnect with your personal life, and mentally transition out of event mode.

Your business may be your passion, but it should not consume every part of your life.

Recovery allows you to return to your work with fresh perspective and renewed energy. It also makes it easier to sustain a career that may span decades rather than simply getting through the next event.

REDEFINING SUCCESS

For independent meeting professionals, success is often measured by the size of the event, the number of clients, revenue, or the next opportunity.

Those things matter. But there is another measure worth considering which is how sustainable is the life you are building?

A successful business should support your life rather than require you to sacrifice it.

Your creativity, experience, relationships, and ability to lead are among your greatest professional assets. Protecting your mental and emotional energy is part of protecting those assets.

FINAL THOUGHT

When you are the entire team, taking care of yourself becomes part of taking care of your business. You don't have to respond to every message immediately. You don't have to personally handle every task. You don't have to prove your dedication by working until you are exhausted.

Give yourself permission to create boundaries, ask for support, take a break, and step away.

YOUR BUSINESS NEEDS YOUR EXPERTISE.

YOUR CLIENTS NEED YOUR CREATIVITY.

AND YOU DESERVE A CAREER THAT LEAVES ROOM FOR YOU, TOO.

DISCOVER EXCLUSIVE OPPORTUNITIES WITH CIRQUE DU SOLEIL®

Full theater buyouts, curated VIP experiences, and exclusive access designed for groups that expect more.

Inside the Las Vegas theaters of Cirque du Soleil, your group event becomes so much more than a gathering. It becomes a full-sensory experience that pulls your guests in and refuses to let go.

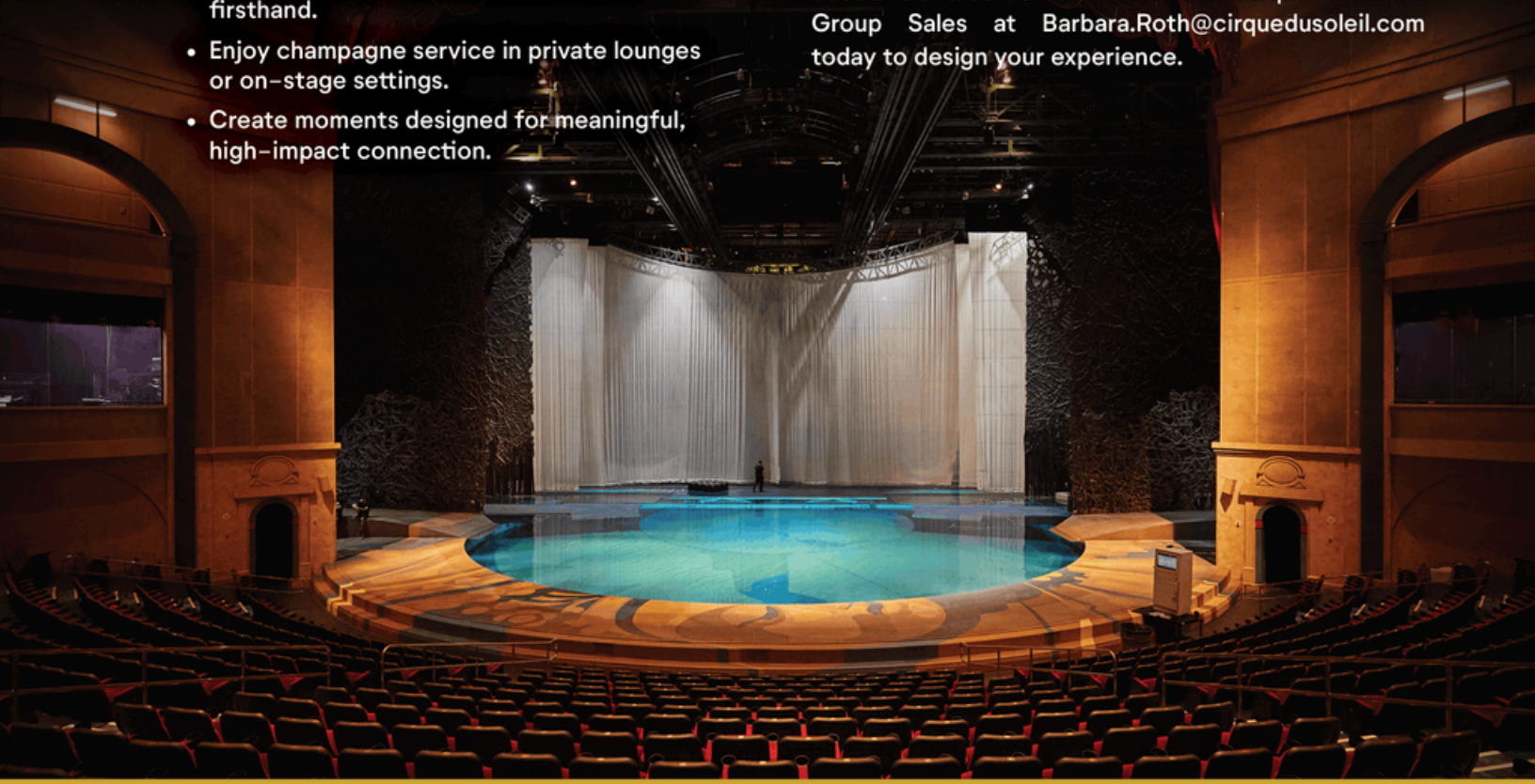
With access to immersive lighting, dynamic staging, and the same production capabilities behind every iconic Cirque du Soleil performance, our custom-built theaters enable your presentations, product reveals, and general sessions to unfold with cinematic scale and precision.

- Venture backstage to explore the craft behind the spectacle.
- Meet the artists and hear their stories firsthand.
- Enjoy champagne service in private lounges or on-stage settings.
- Create moments designed for meaningful, high-impact connection.

Full Theater, Full Impact

For the ultimate distinction, a full theater buyout places your group at the center of a private Cirque du Soleil performance, complete with branded moments, executive stage access, and an audience made up entirely of your guests.

With exclusive access to productions like "O" at Bellagio, KÀ at MGM Grand, Mystère at Treasure Island, and Mad Apple at New York-New York, this is where Las Vegas events are elevated beyond expectation. Let's create something your guests can't stop talking about. Contact Barbara Roth with Cirque du Soleil Group Sales at Barbara.Roth@cirquedusoleil.com today to design your experience.



MYSTÈRE AT TREASURE ISLAND | O AT BELLAGIO | KÀ AT MGM GRAND | Michael Jackson ONE AT MANDALAY BAY | CIRQUE DU SOLEIL MAD APPLE AT NY – NY









Anaheim and Garden Grove:

A Connected Destination for Meetings and Events

Anaheim and Garden Grove are more than professional meeting destinations – they're seamlessly connected, neighboring cities where unforgettable moments are experienced. Together, the two cities offer planners the ability to create meeting experiences that feel cohesive while giving meeting planners and attendees plenty of choice. Hotels at a range of price points, walkable amenities, convenient transportation and an abundance of dining and entertainment make it easy for attendees to transition from business to discovery.

The Anaheim Convention Center anchors an extensive collection of hotels, restaurants, entertainment and walkable gathering places. Garden Grove adds even more depth to the meeting landscape with its collection of full-service hotels with flexible meeting space, along with distinctive dining and cultural experiences that give attendees more ways to connect outside of the ballroom. From group dining and receptions to networking over Vietnamese cuisine in Little Saigon, Garden Grove provides an authentic extension of the Anaheim experience.

And the destination's attendee experience is poised to become even more dynamic. OCVIBE, a 100-acre mixed-use district, that's taking shape around the Honda Center, new dining, live entertainment, public spaces, hotels and pedestrian-friendly pathways.

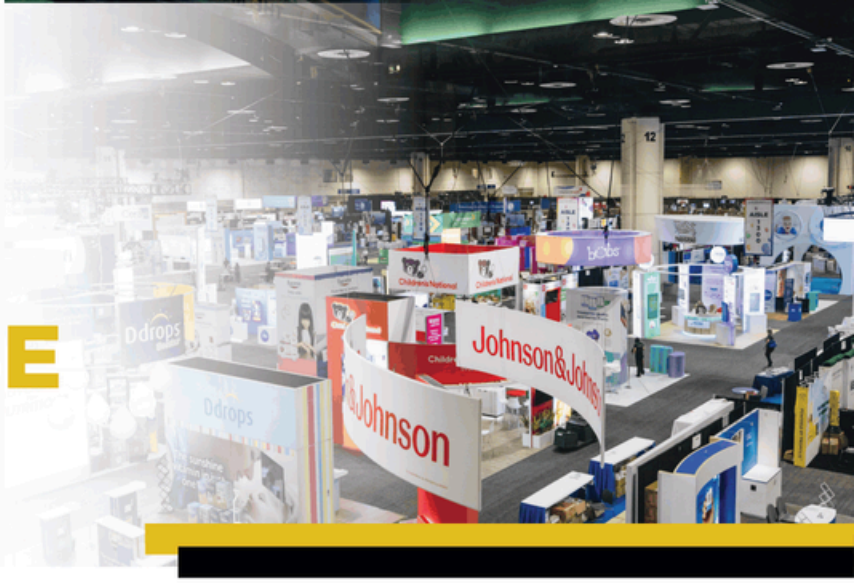
The result is a destination designed not just for today's meetings, but for what your future meetings need-where the meeting and convention experiences seamlessly expand into a connected, evolving destination that gives attendees more ways to gather, explore and engage.

visit Anaheim

More info?

HERITAGE

GROWING WITH PURPOSE



The events industry is constantly evolving, and so is Heritage.

For more than 60 years, we've partnered with meeting planners, associations, and exhibitors to create successful events across the country. As our client partners continue to grow, we've made it a priority to grow alongside them by investing in new markets, expanding our team, and strengthening the resources that support every event.



LOCAL EXPERTISE NATIONWIDE SUPPORT

Our full-service So Cal facility located just minutes from the region's major convention venues, allows us to provide faster response times, streamlined logistics, local print production, furnishings, and exhibit support throughout Southern California. The result is more efficient event execution, greater flexibility on-site, and reduced transportation costs.

1963	8,290	225	98%+
Founded	Events to date	Venues a year	Client Retention

BUILT AROUND PEOPLE

Our account management, exhibitor services, logistics, operations, transportation, and on-site labor teams work together with one goal in mind: creating a seamless experience for our client partners and exhibitors. Whether coordinating complex logistics, navigating last-minute changes, or supporting exhibitors on the show floor, our teams approach every event with responsiveness, transparency, and a commitment to finding solutions.





AN OWNERSHIP MINDSET

As an employee-owned company, every member of the Heritage team has a personal investment in the work we deliver. That ownership mindset influences every interaction, encouraging accountability, collaboration, and a long-term commitment to the relationships we've built over the past six decades. It also reinforces our belief that exceptional service isn't just about executing an event successfully. It's about becoming a trusted partner people can count on year after year.

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Celebrating Culture Together: How Event Professionals Can Showcase Filipino American Heritage

HONORING TRADITIONS, UPLIFTING VOICES, AND CREATING MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCES THROUGH EVENTS.

Each October, Filipino American History Month honors the vibrant culture, rich history, and contributions of the Filipino community in the United States. For event planners, vendors, and venues, this month is a powerful opportunity to move beyond token acknowledgment by creating meaningful, engaging, and culturally authentic experiences that celebrate and uplift Filipino voices, traditions, and businesses.

Below are detailed, actionable ways to bring these celebrations to life.

01 PARTNER WITH FILIPINO-OWNED VENDORS AND TALENT

Instead of simply ordering “Filipino-inspired” items from mainstream suppliers, work directly with Filipino-owned businesses to ensure authenticity and direct economic support.

- **Catering:** Partner with local Filipino restaurants or caterers to serve dishes like lumpia shanghai, pancit bihon, adobo, and halo-halo.
- **Entertainment**: Hire tinikling or pandanggo sa ilaw dance troupes, kulintang musicians, or modern Filipino American performers who blend tradition with contemporary styles.
- **Artisan Features:** Showcase handmade capiz shell décor, woven banig mats, or hand-carved wooden serving trays as part of your event setup or giveaways.

Tip: Ask vendors if they can share the cultural significance behind their products or performances for added audience engagement.

02 INCORPORATE AUTHENTIC CULTURAL ELEMENTS

Filipino culture is visually rich and full of storytelling opportunities.

- **Décor:** Use the parol (star lantern) as an entrance feature or decorate tables with textiles from the Ifugao or T’boli weaving traditions.
- **Color Palette:** Draw from the bright, bold hues of the Philippine flag—red, blue, yellow, and white—or the earthy tones of rural celebrations.
- **Music:** Play a curated mix of kundiman, folk music, and modern OPM to set the atmosphere.

Tip: Collaborate with local Filipino artists to create custom stage backdrops, murals, or photo walls that double as Instagram-worthy moments.

03 CREATE EDUCATIONAL MOMENTS

Infuse cultural context into the guest experience.

- **Interactive Exhibits:** Display a timeline of Filipino American contributions in U.S. history, from the first recorded Filipino settlement in 1587 to present-day leaders in politics, science, and the arts.
- **Storytelling Corners:** Invite community elders or historians to share short anecdotes about migration, resilience, or traditions.
- **Cultural Workshops:** Host mini sessions on Baybayin (ancient Filipino script), jeepney painting, or Filipino folk dances where guests can join in.

Recommended Resources for Event Planners

- **Filipino American National Historical Society (FANHS):** The foundational organization preserving Filipino American history. Its archives, oral histories, and exhibits (based in Stockton, CA) are invaluable for building historically accurate programming. FANHS was instrumental in establishing Filipino American History Month in 1992.
- **Google Arts & Culture – "10 Ways to Celebrate Filipino American History Month":** A multimedia hub with key milestones, veteran stories, and cultural spotlights, ideal for educational signage or digital exhibits.
- **SOMA Pilipinas:** Chronicles early Filipino presence in North America, from the Manila galleon trade to Filipino communities in St. Malo, Louisiana—excellent for highlighting the deep roots of Filipino migration.
- **Historic Filipinotown, Los Angeles:** A cultural landmark with public art like the Gintong Kasaysayan, Gintong Pamana mural, a striking visual that celebrates Filipino solidarity in labor and culture. Event planners in SoCal can organize walking tours or photo activations here.

Tip: Turn these learning moments into "passport" activities where guests receive stamps for each cultural station they visit, redeemable for a small prize.

04 ENSURE INCLUSIVE ACCESSIBILITY

Filipino celebrations often include large, multigenerational gatherings—design with this in mind.

- **Language Access:** Provide materials in both English and Tagalog (and other Filipino languages if relevant, like Ilocano or Cebuano).
- **Elder Seating:** Place comfortable, easily accessible seating close to the main activities.
- **Dietary Considerations:** Offer vegetarian versions of traditional dishes and clearly label allergens like shrimp or peanuts.
- **Child-Friendly Areas:** Include spaces where younger attendees can safely play or take part in craft activities.

05 COLLABORATE WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Instead of planning in isolation, co-create with local Filipino American groups.

- Work with cultural centers, advocacy organizations, or student associations for program ideas and performers.
- Invite them to set up information booths about community programs and resources.

Tip: Collaboration with groups like FANHS or SOMA Pilipinas also builds long-term relationships for year-round cultural integration.

06 EXTEND THE CELEBRATION BEYOND OCTOBER

Representation is most impactful when it's consistent.

- Add Filipino food pop-ups or performances to summer festivals, holiday markets, or corporate luncheons.
- Include Filipino speakers or panelists at leadership and diversity conferences.
- Use Filipino businesses for year-round supplier needs—from floral design to photography.



Jennifer Hronek

Jennifer Hronek's journey with MPI began in the early 1990s, shortly after she launched her catering and event planning business in 1992. While exploring different industry associations, she found something special in MPI: a welcoming community that offered meaningful connections and opportunities to grow.

A weekend retreat in Tempe, Arizona, became a turning point. The relationships she built led to new catering and wedding opportunities, including her very first wedding booking. That event even led to another wedding for Slash of Guns N' Roses! Jennifer went on to join the MPI Board of Directors in 1995 and was named Supplier of the Year in 1997.

But for Jennifer, MPI has always been about more than business. It's where she met her husband and built friendships and professional relationships that continue decades later. When asked to describe the MPI community in one word, her answer was simple: Friends.

Her advice to those just starting in the industry? Volunteer and keep an open mind about the many paths available. She believes leadership is about leading by example, listening, working together, and serving others.

Outside of work, Jennifer enjoys traveling, entertaining, gardening, cooking, and spending time with friends. She's also studying wine and working toward her Level II sommelier certification.

And if she had to choose a song that represents her career journey? Jennifer says it hasn't been written yet!

Jennifer at one of the weddings she planned for Slash from Guns N' Roses!

PEOPLE
IDEAS
CONNECTIONS
OPPORTUNITY

A Be an MPI SERIES FEATURE

Celebrating
MEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Bernie Gaps | 25 years
Scott White | 20 years
Fred Onsaga | 20 years
Maria Day | 20 years
Mia McMahon | 15 years
Monique Reaves | 10 years
Patty Kindness | 5 years
Dyemond Cooper | 5 years
Jennifer Lier | 5 years

and Celebrating 1 Year

Rosemary Vera
Erik Seversen
Cameron Middleton
Felipe Pizarro
Tigran Marabyan

Welcome to
NEW MEMBERS

Ashley Applebaum
Mariah Barabe
Isabelle Gates
Trina Gonzales-Van
Kirin Khanna
Deanna Kirk
Katie Kong
Andrea Leventhal
Kelly McGrath
Lisa Meller
Yolanda Menz
Christina Mociler
Michael Naggi
Dawnee Pitzer
Stefanie Rodriguez
Darin Roper
Krista Schroeder
Mario Thompson
Sara Tilloo
Jay Tobin
Sara Worthington



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FOOD FOR THOUGHT



Separating Signal from Noise in Event Innovation

In an industry full of what's next, how do we recognize what actually matters?

There's always something new making waves in the events industry. From emerging technologies and AI-powered platforms to creative event formats and attendee engagement trends, innovation seems to be everywhere. And with new ideas constantly competing for our attention, it can feel like keeping up is becoming a full-time job.

But just because something is new doesn't necessarily mean it's better.

As event professionals, our challenge isn't simply embracing the latest trends. It's recognizing which innovations genuinely enhance the experiences we create and which are just adding to the noise.

The most impactful ideas aren't always the flashiest. Sometimes, innovation means simplifying a planning process, rethinking how attendees connect, or finding a more intentional way to deliver an experience. It's less about creating the next big spectacle and more about understanding what will make a meaningful difference.

Before jumping on the latest trend, it's worth asking: Does this solve a real problem? Will it improve the attendee experience? Does it support the event's overall goals, or are we incorporating it simply because it's new?

Of course, staying innovative also means being willing to experiment. Not every new idea will be a success, and that's okay. Testing new approaches, listening to attendee feedback, and learning what works are all part of moving our industry forward.

As technology continues to evolve and attendee expectations shift, the ability to separate meaningful innovation from passing trends will become even more valuable.

Because the future of events won't be defined by who adopts the most trends, but by who uses innovation to create experiences that truly matter.